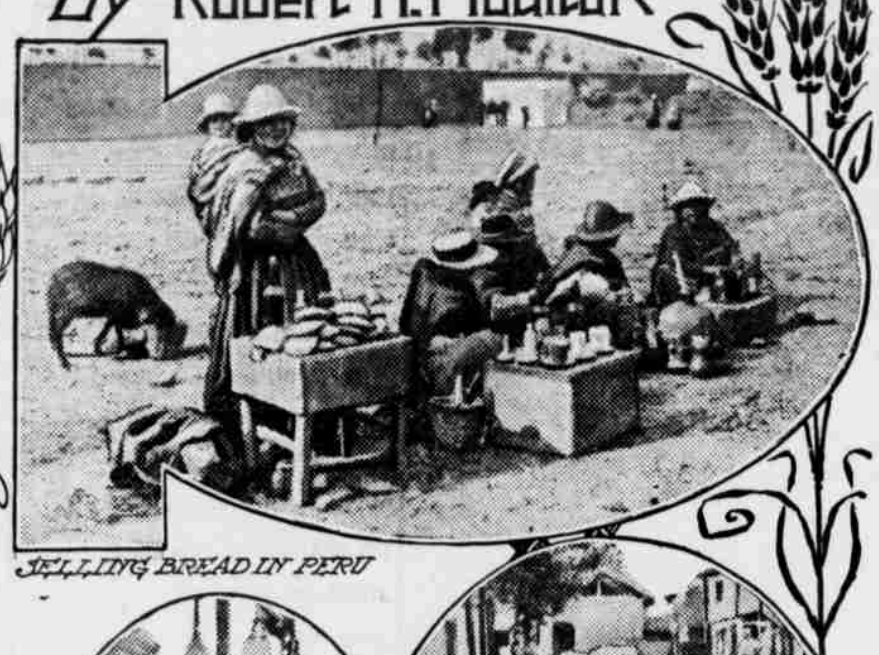
Our Daily Bread

By Robert H. Moulton

IN CENTRAL AMERICA



SELLING BREAD IN PERU

NEW YORK

IN BULGARIA

THE story of bread is more than fifty centuries long. One might almost say that to know the story of bread is to know the story of the world. As far back as history takes us there was wheat. At one time in the remote past, authorities say, wheat was a wild grass, and the theory has been advanced that it is a descendant of "wild emmer," traces of which are found even today among the rocks of upper Galilee, in the vicinity of Mount Hermon.

The large fine grains which now go to make up our daily bread are the result of ages of cultivation and the experiments of innumerable Burbanks, men who made it their work to improve upon the work of Nature. Enough of these grains were gathered from the wheat fields of the United States in 1920 to make something like 750,000,000 bushels.

The average mind cannot conceive of such an enormous quantity of grain measured in this way. But an illustration may make it clearer. These seven hundred million bushels would fill enough freight cars to make one continuous train from New York to San Francisco and back again, with a few hundred miles left over.

The Staff of Life.

Bread has rightly been called the staff of life, the staff upon which strong nations lean. And, whereas we have cultivated the taste for some foods now more or less in common use, we did not have to learn to eat wheat—it came as naturally as the drinking of water. Man seems to have been born with a liking for bread, and to eat it once is to desire it ever afterward.

We have heard the title "king" applied to corn, but rightly it belongs to wheat; for wheat contains all the fifteen essential elements of nutrition and there is probably no one other article of food which will carry a man so far or so well.

The people of the United States are naturally great wheat eaters. The average per capita, after the grain has been turned into flour, is five bushels a year. It was in this country that wheat-raising received its mighty impetus through the invention of the reaper by Cyrus McCormick. It was the reaper that made great wheat crops possible and cheap bread a certainty in the United States; and it inevitably followed that we became the greatest eaters of wheat in the world. All other nations followed our methods of cultivation and harvesting, and they, too, came to depend more upon wheat as a food and to raise more of it.

Every Day a Harvest.

A writer has truly said that the sun never sets on the harvest fields of the world; in every month of the year wheat is being harvested somewhere. In January it is in the Argentine and New Zealand; in February and March it is in East India, Upper Egypt, and Chili. April finds the work going on in Lower Egypt, Asia Minor, and Mexico. In May the harvesters are busy in Algiers, Central Asia, China, Japan and Texas.

June sees them at work in the fields of Turkey, Spain, Southern France, California, Tennessee, Virginia, Kentucky, Kansas, Utah and Missouri. When July comes the harvest shifts to Northern France, Roumania, Austria-Hungary, Southern Russia, Southern England, Germany, Switzerland, and, in the United States, in Oregon, Nebraska, Southern Minnesota, Wisconsin, Colorado, Washington, the group of central states, New England and Eastern Canada. August, perhaps the quietest month of the year, still finds plenty going on in Holland, Belgium, Great Britain, Denmark, Poland, the Dakotas, and Western Canada. In September the scene shifts to Scotland, Sweden, Norway, Northern Russia, and Siberia, and continues through October, November is divided between South Africa and Peru, and December between Uruguay and Australia.

All Nations Eat Wheat.

While bread, in one form or another, is the chief food of all nations, they have various methods of making it. Even the Japanese, a rice-eating people, make bread—nice snowy loaves—and many of the loaves are used only in festivals and at feasts. In Eastern Poland, where bread is a very important food, it can be purchased in almost any size or shape—big loaves and little, large rolls and small, and a multitude of fancy shapes. The venders of bread in this country display their wares out of doors, in baskets and on tables.

The big rye loaves sold on the East Side of New York, in the crowded tenement districts, are so large that they are frequently cut and sold by the pound. It is almost as much as a small boy can do to lug one of these loaves home, and if he is required to carry two he generally impresses his little wagon or the family baby carriage into service.

Many Styles In Bread.

Every nation makes its bread somewhat differently. In Berkovitsa, Bulgaria, for instance, the people hold a regular bread-making fest in the street. The women employ curious bread boards about 2 feet in diameter and supported on other boards a few inches from the ground. The dough is rolled out on these boards with slender wooden rods and the result, after baking, is a kind of gigantic cracker an inch or two thick. The women laugh and gossip as they work, making a sort of holiday of the affair, while the children stand around and look on expectantly.

The Norwegian peasants make a similar kind of flat bread, the baking generally being done on a sheet of iron placed on top of a heap of stones which are kept hot by means of a nest of glowing embers underneath. A little roller, with notches, something like a miniature carpet sweeper, is used to flatten the dough and give the cakes of bread an ornamental appearance.

Different Places, Different Bread.

In Lebanon, Syria, the native bread is made in the street with the neighbors looking on. Much the same sort of utensil is used as in Norway and the baking likewise is done on a sheet of metal with a fire underneath. The women of the family attend to the mixing of the dough and the baking, while the job of the man is to keep up the fire with twigs and chips of wood gathered wherever they can be found.

In Southern Europe young boys are the principal venders of bread, carrying around large baskets filled with loaves of rye bread which the natives consider delicious. In San Salvador, Central America, the natives make tortilla, a thin, unleavened cake of maize, rolled out with a stone in the shape of our own familiar rolling pin, and baked on a heated iron plate.

In Caracas, Venezuela, the universal food takes a peculiar form. The rolls, which the city baker distributes, carrying his load around in two barrels swung across a sleepy-looking donkey, look like tiny canoes with one end missing.

The Peruvian Indians have queer little booths along the roads for the convenience of the hungry traveler, who will find there loaves shaped something like English muffins and which are better to eat than their appearance would indicate.

Good Market For Ginseng

Product Is Highly Esteemed in China, and Its Cultivation Is Well Worth While.

When a product has no market value for food, medicine or other use in this country it is surprising to find it representing an export value of more than $2,000,000 a year, with an established market extending back more than half a century.

Ginseng is such a product. American medical authorities have never recognized it as having curative value, but for more than a hundred years its root has been highly esteemed in China, and the 1919 shipments of 282,000 pounds sold at from $3 to $23 a pound.

American ginseng was taken to China by early traders, and formed the principal part of the cargo taken by the first American ship that visited China. This ship, the Empress of China, sailed from New York for the celestial empire on February 22, 1784. Decrease in the available quantity of wild ginseng has led many American farmers and gardeners to undertake the domestic culture of ginseng, and the United States Department of Agriculture has issued a new bulletin, Farmer's Bulletin No. 1184, outlining the best methods of culture. The department previously issued Farmer's Bulletin No. 736 on diseases of the ginseng plant.

Ginseng culture is a long and precarious process, requiring six years from seed to marketable root, with the most particular care during the entire process. The market also is limited to such an extent that it is estimated 700 acres would furnish a continuous supply of all that is needed. In the middle of the last century exports to China were eight times what they were in 1919. The price at that time averaged 94 cents a pound. In 1919 it averaged $7.20 per pound.

A Year of Housebuilding.

It is estimated that 417,287 houses were erected in this country during last year.

THREE YEAR OLD WASHED ASHORE

Mrs. Dingman Tells of Adventure of Childhood When Father's Ship Was Wrecked.

RELATES LATER EXPERIENCE

Declares That the Way Tanlac Restored Her Health Is More Remarkable Than Anything She Has Ever Had Happen to Her.

"I've had some remarkable experiences in my life, but none more wonderful than the way Tanlac overcame my troubles and made me gain twenty pounds," was the statement of Mrs. Christina K. Dingman, 1216 Alice St., Oakland, Calif. One of the experiences to which Mrs. Dingman refers is well known to her friends. When a child of three years, accompanying her father, a noted sea captain, on an ocean trip, the vessel was wrecked, but she was almost miraculously saved, the small box into which she was put being washed ashore. According to her statement, Mrs. Dingman enjoyed the best of health until three years ago when she began to suffer from a bad form of stomach trouble and later from rheumatism. How she was completely restored to health is best told in her own words:

"Nobody knows how I suffered for the past three years. No matter how carefully I ate I would endure agonies afterwards from smothering and sinking spells. Sometimes they were so severe I would fall to the floor and would have to be carried to bed. I went for days at a time without eating, as I dreaded the misery I knew would follow, no matter what I ate. Then rheumatism set in and my shoulders and arms hurt me so I couldn't comb my hair. My back felt like it was breaking in two.

"I was almost in the depths of despair when I began on Tanlac, but this grand medicine has made me a well and happy woman. I'm not even troubled with constipation now, thanks to the Laxative Tablets, which are far superior to anything of the kind I ever tried. It seems almost too good to be true, but here I am in the best of health and spirits after I had given up hope, and I'll always praise Tanlac for it."

Tanlac is sold by leading druggists everywhere.—Advertisement.

KNEW THE WORD OF COMMAND

Old Lady Quick to Recognize Phrase That She Had Heard Used by Her Willie.

Military terminology has affixed itself to our language. Recent advertisements of a new dictionary use such phrases as "cheerio," "how is your morale?" and "the zero hour." And only last week the papers spoke of a "barrage of coughing," which drowned out a lecture speaker in Brooklyn.

In City Hall park recently another instance was noted. A young man halted at a newsstand. "Times," said he. Then, as the "newsie"—an old woman of sixty—stooped to get it, "As you were! World!"

The old woman, as she handed him the paper, clicked her heels together and delivered a perfect hand salute."

"My Willie was in the army, too," she explained.—New York World.

More Than Most of Us Do.

The usual small-boy discussion was going on among the boys from the flat as to whose father was the smartest.

"Well," said one, "my father has a lot of people working for him, and he tells them to do things and they do 'em."

"My father goes around on the train and only comes home on Saturday nights," said another, as though traveling was a gauge of smartness.

"My father is smart," said the third. "He says he always makes out his own income tax."

His Reason.

"I wish you would tell me," said the agent, who had been a long time on Mr. Snaggs' trail, "what is your objection to having your life insured?"

"Well, I don't mind telling you," replied Snaggs. "The idea of being more valuable dead than alive is distasteful to me."

Harmony of aim, not identity of conclusion, is the secret of the sympathetic life.—Emerson.

"I'll Say I Was!"

Mrs. D. Pirie Beyea came to Kansas City last week to attend the nurses' convention. Her visit to the Middle West resulted in renewing many acquaintances made during her four years' service as an overseas nurse. Many of her patients were men from the Eighty-ninth and Thirty-fifth divisions who fought in the Argonne.

At Eleventh and Main streets she spied a familiar figure directing the traffic.

"Say, buddy," she called, "weren't you in the army?"

"I'll say I was," replied the traffic officer.

"Weren't you with the One Hundred and Thirty-seventh?"

"I'll say I was."

"Do you remember when you were going through the village of Bon Quit Vaux and the little fat nurse who brought you a bowl of soup?"

"I'll say I do; were you that little nurse?"

"I'll say I was."—Kansas City Star.

Cigar Ash Causes Smash-Ups.

Cigar ashes are sometimes the cause of automobile accidents and frequently the cause of confusion in traffic. The motorist who unconsciously sticks his arm out of the side of the car to knock off the ashes confuses the driver following him, who may think it is a signal to turn.

"I have seen this happen a good many times on the road," said a driver. "You naturally think he plans to turn at the next corner. Misinterpretation of such signals has caused many accidents."—New York Sun.